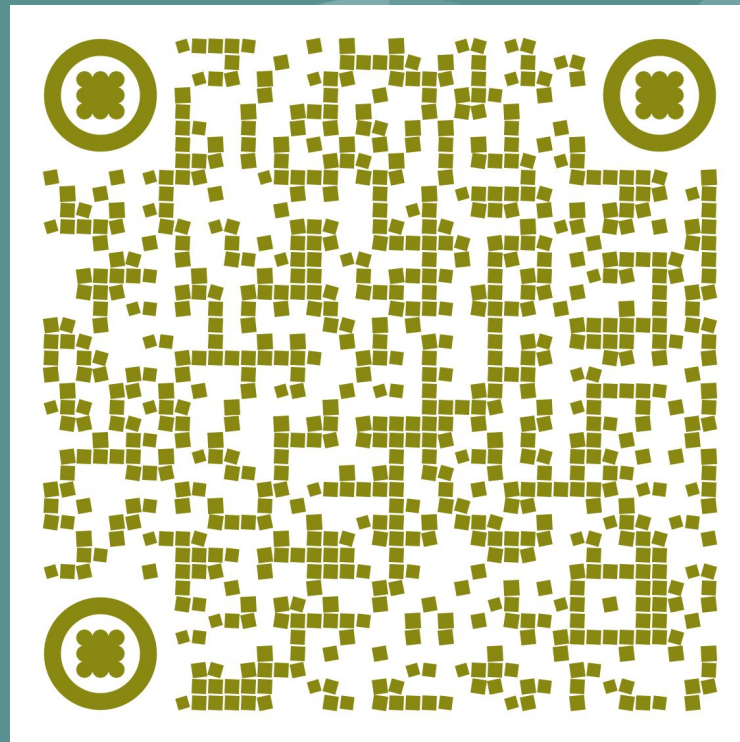


Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra

CASMEC 2024 Sacramento, CA

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Click this link for updated google slides:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1TQJMfcml62Zg_TksL2Hz94utBM2A46YDAyk70be8lz4/edit?usp=sharing



Overview

- Why Creativity?
- Sample Lessons
- Curricular ideas
- Resources

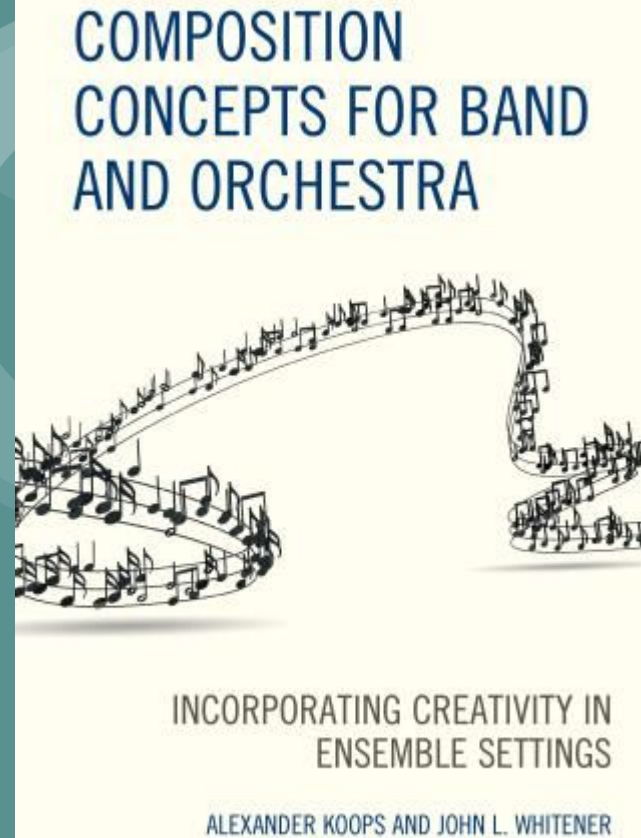


Coops Dissertation work (Whitener & Tichelli, dissertation committee) = composing in middle school band

Composing our Future (OUP) Chapter 8. Facilitating Composition in Instrumental Settings, Alexander Coops

Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra (GIA)
(picture with Julie Bounds after a CASMEC presentation...
... she contributed a lesson plan in the book)

Composition
Concepts for Band
and Orchestra
By A. Coops & J.
Whitener (Rowman
Littlefield)



<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781475848908/Composition-Concepts-for-Band-and-Orchestra-Incorporating-Creativity-in-Ensemble-Settings>



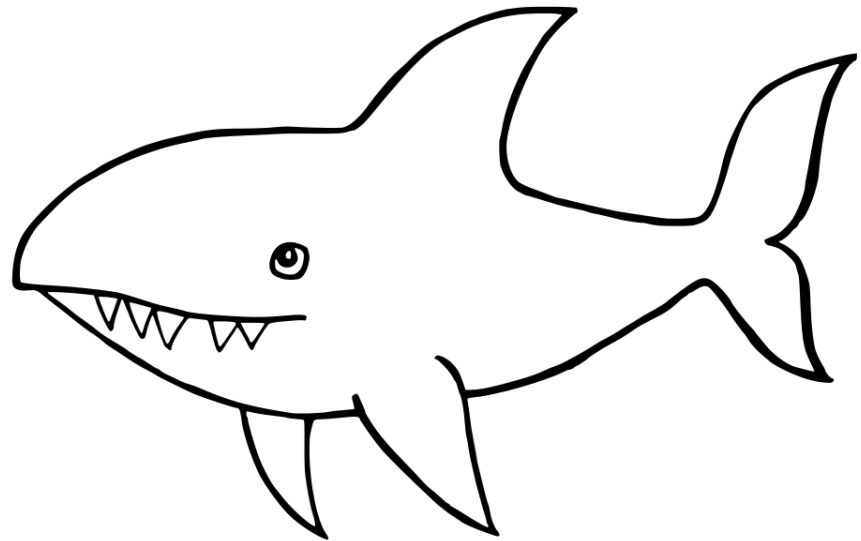
Why Creativity?

Why music composition?

Please follow my directions

Take a blank sheet of paper

Draw what I teach you to draw





Why Creativity?

Why music composition?

So often ensemble directors stick to the “notes” and offer NO creativity in their lessons.

“Shaping a phrase” or adding rubato does have an element of creativity, and is important, but we need to nurture original creativity as well.

When students compose, they are reflecting the ultimate student-centered learning, as well as deeper levels of learning.



Why is creativity important?

- Unique aspect of being human
 - We are all naturally creative
- Self-expression; Emotional expression
- Original music creation = student centered
- Relevant!
 - Students can express things in styles/vocabularies they are interested in



Why is creativity important?

Added bonus:

- Composing helps students be better performers; they understand the music at a deeper level (long term).
- Great form of assessment!
 - Example: If you teach a new rhythm to 6th grade band, and then ask them to compose 4 bars of rhythm using that new rhythm somewhere, it shows whether they really understand the rhythm
- Its enjoyable and fun!



Challenge of “Not Enough Time”

- Decrease the difficulty level of 1 or 2 pieces on your concert so you have some more time for composing
- Decrease the amount of concerts/performances
- Add or substitute a composition concert or one student piece on a concert
- Do short creative warm ups ([Koops google slides hand out](#))
- Open the door for more composing outside of class;
- Introduce digital composing tools (students can continue composing outside of class time)
- Student centered; composition = relevant to student = worth extra time
- Well rounded music training includes creativity
- CA standards/National Standards require creativity



Quote from a local teacher I have worked with for many years:

The high school seniors came back to visit our middle school on Friday, wearing their cap and gowns. Many students came to say hello and we catch up and find out where they are going to college. A former trombone player asked me if I still did Composition Lessons, and I said yes ...

He said he is going to UCSB and going to major in Music Composition, all because of the experience he had at my school! Thanks for inspiring me which in turn is inspiring others to write music.

Jeff Grable, Dana Middle School, Arcadia, CA



Implementation/Activities

Soundscape

1.

Say

“Shhhhhhhhhh.”

2.

Laugh
repeatedly
until cued to
stop.

3.

Snap fingers.

4.

Tap pencil on
stand.
(Optional:
Together, as
conducted
on cue.)

Free handout:

https://rowman.com/WebDocs/Composition_Concepts_for_Band_and_Orchestra_Student_Handouts.pdf



Band pieces with soundscapes

Blackshaw, Jody Whirlwind (Grade 1)

Bukvich, Daniel Dinosaurs (Grade 2)

Broege, Timothy The Headless
Horseman (Grade 2)

Jennings, Paul A Prehistoric Suite
(Grade 2)

Shapiro, Alex Paper Cut (Grade 2.5)

Carnahan, John. . . And the
Antelope Play (Grade 3)

Colgrass, Michael Old Churches
(Grade 3)

Duffy, Thomas Snakes! (Grade 3)

Viet Cuong Diamond Tide (Grade
3)

Smith, R. W. In a Gentle Rain
(Grade 4)

Pennington, John Apollo
(Grade 4)

Whitacre, Eric Cloudburst
(Grade 4.5)

Duffy, Thomas Crystals
(Grade 4/5)

Husa, Music for Prague 1968
(Grade 5)



Orchestra pieces with soundscapes

Earle Brown: Modules 1 and 2

Rands, Bernard Agenda

Meyer, Richard Le Divin Enfant

Meyer, Richard Ear-igami

Adler, Samuel A Little Bit of . . . Space . . . Time

Balmages, Brian Creatures (Aleatoric)

Cummings, Walter Water Reflections
(Soundscape)

Reznicow, Joshua Avian Dance (Soundscape)

McBrien, Brendan Contraption (Band or Orchestra versions)

Punwar, Katherine Follow the Drinking Gourd

Meyer, Richard Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space

Schafer, R. Murray Statement in Blue

Erb, Donald Bakersfield Pieces

Hovhaness, Alan Floating Worlds

Soundscapes Recommended Listening

***From Composition Concepts
for Band and Orchestra*
by A. Koops & J. Whitener**

Benjamin Britten	<u>Four Sea Interludes</u>
John Cage	<u>Water Walk; In a Landscape</u>
Viet Cuong	<u>Re(new)al: Concerto for Percussion Quartet</u>
Edvard Grieg	<u>"Morning" from Peer Gynt, op. 23</u>
Ferde Grofé	<u>"Sunrise" from Grand Canyon Suite</u>
Olivier Messiaen	<u>Des canyons aux étoiles</u>
Karlheinz Stockhausen	<u>Gruppen</u>
Iannis Xenakis	<u>"Metastasis," "Terretektorh"</u>



Rhythm Examples

Ostinatos or words into music:

What's for dinner?

Hamburgers and
French Fries

Words  instrument

Diminution Augmentation

Repetition Fragmentation

Sequence Variation

Layering Articulation

Dynamics Tempo/Speed

Foothill Shrimp Music

Foothill MS Band Students

Clarinet

$\text{♩} = 120$

Shrimp Shrimp Shrimp Shrimp Chi-cken nu ggets Shrimp Shrimp

5

Solo? Tutti

Pe-pper o - ni pi - zza Pe-pper o - ni pi - zza Pe-pper -o-nni Pi - zza



Curricular Ideas

Elements of music approach: Rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, form,

Other approaches:

Movie composition unit

Electronic music composition unit

Compose music for an advertisement, or a ringtone

Compose music inspired by art

Collaborate with one department per month (art; creative writing; science; history; PE;)

Advanced: work through a music theory curriculum, but include composing as a main part

Song Writing



Resources for music teachers who want to include composition

- *Musicianship: Composing in Band and Orchestra* (GIA)
(Randles, Stringham, Koops, Hickey, et al)
- *Musicianship: Composing in Choir* (GIA) Strandle
- *Music Outside the Lines*. Maude Hickey (OUP)
- *Composing our Future* (OUP)
- Koops & Whitener. *Composition Concepts for Band and Orchestra* (Rowman Littlefield)
- Koops google doc with links for resources in composition:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zzBZSA_e8oGaUxLi-Dm_ibOzzelal8z51c3mnWNLAE4/edit?usp=sharing



Sample Websites/Apps/Composition Programs

Apps:

Notion <https://www.presonus.com/products/Notation-Software>

Using a finger or stylus, you can now write music in your own handwriting and see it effortlessly convert to digital notation.

Fun websites abound:

Groove Pizza

<https://apps.musedlab.org/groovepizza/?museid=S10ads8AV&>

<https://musedlab.org/aqwertyon>

Composition programs:

Noteflight OR Flat (Notation programs; free version-cloud based, so students can access on any device anywhere)

Band Lab; OR Soundtrap (similar to Garageband; free version-cloud based, so students can access on any device anywhere)

Musescore (Free Notation program; downloads to your computer)

Professional programs: Finale; Sibelius; Logic; Pro-tools, Notion, etc.



Q+A / Reflection

What will you take from this presentation that will help you increase creativity in your school program?

What questions remain?